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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: December 22, 1958

SUBJECT: Recent Developments Regarding Berlin and the Mikoyan Visit

PARTICIPANTS: M. Charles Lucet, Minister, French Embassy
 M. Pierre Pelen, Counselor, French Embassy
 EUR - Mr. Kohler
 GER - Mr. Lampson

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In the course of a conversation on the Geneva talks on surprise attack M. Lucet and Mr. Kohler exchanged views regarding recent developments affecting Berlin. They agreed that the NATO ministerial meeting had gone well and the NATO communique was fine. Mr. Kohler then brought M. Lucet up to date on the status of the Western replies to the Soviet Note of November 27. He pointed out that although the Four Powers would handle differently the part of their replies refuting Soviet distortions of history, the following substantive sections would be in close harmony. The British were using language identical to that of the U.S. reply throughout a large part of their note. The French reply would be the same in substance. Because of their special status the Germans had to cast their reply along different lines but their draft fitted in excellently with the answers of the other three. Mr. Kohler said they hoped to deliver the four replies on December 31 as a New Year's present to Khrushchev.

M. Lucet expressed the view that the Mikoyan visit was motivated by the firmness which the western countries had shown at the NATO meeting. Mr. Kohler said that the facts of the case were that Mikoyan had asked for a visa to visit his friend Menshikov and that he represented his visit as a holiday trip. That was all we knew about it. Ambassador Thompson guessed he would want to see high U.S. officials and talk about trade and Berlin but he had no information from the Soviet Government to back this up. Ambassador Thompson was coming to Washington in January. His plans had been made before the Mikoyan visit came up and the Department had told him it saw no reason to change his schedule. The timing of his visit with that of Mikoyan was purely accidental.

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